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Australian Coalition for East Timor -- Timor Activists Conference
NSW Institute of Technology, Sydney, April 6-7. DRAFT MINUTES

SATURDAY MORNING : Agenda adopted

1. Report by Abilio Araujo on the situation in East Timor. Summary :AA traced events following the ending of the ceasefire in August 1983. Indonesian offensive concentrated 12 battalions in the eastern part of the territory from the Baucau-Viqueque road. Fretilin however launched big actions in the south-centre region whihh Indonesian forces then shelled from land and sea. Since April 1984 more batalions of Indonesian troops sent to central regions. Timorese civilians were forced to take part in Indonesian operations. In June and July 1984 Fretilin launched attacks in north-central region and in mid-1984 opened a new guerrilla front in Balibo border area.

In August 1983, Fretilin called on all hansips to join resistance forces Already had underground MPLN (Popular Militias of National Liberation) operating inside .Rajah of Mehara and others joined resistance. AA listed Fretilin units and areas in which they were operating. No one in Fretilin areas (containing about 60,000 civilians plus guerrillas) had died from malnutrition last year. Food situation critical in concentration camps. Strict control stop production and conscription to aid Indonesian offensives means situation very bad. Indonesian troops instructed to destroy all possible food supplies when on offensives including sago trees.

2. Report by Jose Ramos Horta on diplomatic situation. Summary: JRH explained why problems for East Timor winning more support in UN etc: no organised and influential bloc of nations such as OAU, Arab League etc in the region; no superpower involved; influence of Aust. and NZ on south Pacific nations. Also due to fact of isolation of ET from TV cameras etc, no "war in the lounge room" as in Viet Nam. In past UN Sec Gen Waldheim ignored Timor and other "small wars". New secretary-general did nothing for two years, only in 1983-1984 began some consultations with Portugal and Indonesia but not directly with Timorese. Portugal-Indonesian talks: Portugal only raising human rights issues. In this context, Fretilin calling for a ceasefire without conditions as a means of ending most human rights abuses. Fretilin is considering its strategy for UN. It wants discussion at least at next General Assembly and is assessing the state of the "numbers game". Hope also that East Timor resolution will be passed at Non-Aligned Heads of State Summit in Angola in September

SATURDAY AFTERNOON:

1. Information servicing: JRH raised problems of distribution of information from inside ET . Proposal to establish a Fretilin information centre in Australia for the Pacific-Asia region. Other proposals by JRH on format of information distribution to media etc.

Resolution adopted after discussion:

a) Material produced or arriving in Portugal from ET should be sent by the Fretilin office in Lisbon to the ACET office, c/- Timor office, 183 Gertrude St., Fitzroy 3065

b) Material produced in Australia or reaching Australia from inside ET should be sent to the Fretilin office in Lisbon by ACET.

~~c) the ACET information exchange should be a regional office for Aust, NZ, South Pacific and Asia~~

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d) the relationship between the ACET information exchange and the Fretilin regional office be reviewed when the latter is established.

2. International support. JRH reported on his visits to Japan and NZ. NZ LP national executive supportive and very criticial of Lange's bad stand on ET. Good chance of next NZLP national conference in September passing good resolution in ET. NZ supporters planning campaign leading up to conference. Amnesty International is expected to launch worldwide campaign around ET in August, which fits in with NZ plans. Potential of support in Japan substantial. Three groups for ET now in Tokyo, Osaka and Hiroshima - the last the

Co-ordinator.
PNG government reviewing position on ET.

JRH stressed importance of campaigining in South Pacific. He also proposed concrete steps in this regard. Also proposed more longterm projects: visit by prominent Timorese composer/conductor/pianist now living in Lisbon, and concert with this being held in conjunction with an international seminar on ET with people such as Noam Chomsky being invited. Project foreseen possibly for next March 1986. JRH also reported possible international conference on ET in Lisbon and European groups making conference during IGGI next September also possibly aid groups doing so.

Resolutions adopted:

1) that a feasibility study be made of a tour/concert by Timorese composer/conductor. Denis F to draw up outline study after discussion with JRH and Martin Wesley Smith and Artists for Peace. Results to be submitted to ACET for distribution to all ACET member groups.
2) ACET supports the concept of a delegation drawn from the Timorese communities in Australia going to NZ to campaign in the run-up to NZLP conference or at other time suitable.
3) ACET endorses the CISET initiative re: delcaration on ET and proposed AETA initiative for a similar declaration for signature/endorsement by trade unions leading up to ACTU conference in September. ACET calls on all members groups to support these initiatives by seeking signatures.

SUNDAY MORNING:

1) Pat Walsh reported on proposal to send three Timorese women to the UN Women's conference in Nairobi beginning July 8 for 8 days. Need to raise $9,000 for the three women going. Application for UN funding ($2000) under way but need for all ACET groups to help raise funds, including by approaching women's and other groups. Pat's report was adopted.
2) Report by John Sinnott on ACET structure, development, nedd to make more formal and elect officebearers and detail functions.

Resolution adopted:

1) ACET membership be for organisations only. Full membership to be open to all East Timor support groups.Other organisations supporting the aims of ACET will be offered the role of sponsoring organisations.
2) an ACET executive to be elected to co-ordinate national activities and have authority to speak on behalf of member organisations after consultation and to make decisions for ACET between conferences.
3) Finance to be raised by membership fees for ET support groups; contributions from sponsoring organisations and specific fundraising activities for ACET.
4) Until the next ACET conference, the executive be : Pat Walsh, John Sinnott, George Preston (Melb) , Denis Freney (Syd), Rikki Stephens (NSW South Coast), plus 1,2 or 3 represenatives from the Timorese community organisations in Australia.(Timorese groups to decide themselves the representative(s) on the executive). The Melbourne-based executive members to choose from themselve the officeholders of secretary and treasurer. The executive compositionxxx to be reviewed next conference.

3) Information Exchange: detailed discussion of needs for information distributio (nb see Sat afternoon decisions also).

Resolution adopted:

1) ACET to distribute material received in Portuguese from Lisbon and inside ET to : Sydney Timorese Cultural Centre, Melb. Timorese centre, Darwin Timorese, Sydney CIET, SA CIET (Jorge Azevedo) and John Waddingham. Denis F to send Portuguese language material he receives to these addresses and ACET c/- Timor office, Fitzroy.
2) Translations in English of material from ET ,UN material, church material etc to be sent to all ACET member groups, by the ACET centre in Melbourne. All ACET groups to forward material for distribution to ACET in Melbourne.
3) John Waddingham be asked if he could undertake responsibility for brief news summary newssheet (East Timor Update) for circulation to politicians and media. Pat Walsh to approach John on this.
4) Melbourne AETA to take responsibility for production of a booklet

to contain the lengthy report on situation in Timor since August 1983 from Xanana now in Portuguese (28 pages of Portuguese). Denis F to take responsibility for translation of this document into English ASAP.
5) John Sinnott to take responsibility for production of a letter inviting organisations to become sponsors of ACET.
6) add to aims of ACET: "to foster formation of viable East Timor support groups in each centre in Australia".
7) that ACET sponsor a $2,500 fund for purchase of vetinerary and other material for the Fretilin farm in Mozambiqu. ACET member groups be asked to set themselves quotas for raising funds for this project,(ie as a share of the $2500).
8) that membership fees for Timorese community groups and ET support groups remain at $20 plus a levy of 5c per member. That the sponsorship fee be $25 for small organisations and $50 for large ones. There is no individual membership for ACET.

4. Proposed Canberra conference of Asia-Pacific support groups,

Resolution adopted:
a) that we support the conference of solidarity groups on Asia and the Pacific in Canberra on the long weekend in June.
b) we propose that the conference be clearly understood to be a conference under the auspices of all participating groups and not of the initiating groups alone.
c) we propose that the conference not be called the Asia Pacific Solidarity Conference as this title would identify it too closely with one of the participating groups. We would propose a title such as Conference of Asia Pacific support groups.

5. Future actions:
Resolution: The conference draws the attention of all member groups to the 10th anniversary of the invasion (Dec 7) and of the declaration of the DRET (Nov 28) and urge all groups to plan major activities around these dates.